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# Virtual Reality



dystopian

virtual-reality

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## Chapter 1 by nabeela

Ellie rounded a corner in the narrow hallway, her breath catching in her chest. Just up ahead she saw spikes jutting out of a shallow pit in the cement floor, and had barely enough time to leap over those to the other side as the man sped after her from behind. She could hear him and his rapid breaths, his persistent footsteps, trailing after her like a *wild predator*. It was an accurate description of the man, if he could still be called as such. His uneven, oily, black hair fell all the way to his shoulders and his skin was pale—yet oddly, lit with a sickly greenish glow. His clothes were ragged and torn, and he was barefoot. He ran with a limp that slowed him down, but he seemed to feel no pain. A hideous, terrific smile was plastered on his face from ear to ear under jet black eyes, which grew larger as he eagerly gripped the dagger in his hand, pursuing his prey. Ellie yelped as something came hurtling toward her face—a giant spiked ball—and quickly hit the floor, rolled, stood up, and continued running. She could now hear voices at the left turn at the end of the hallway, and ran even faster, almost audibly exclaiming from relief.

## Chapter 2 by Anthea Leigh (GONE...)



But the voices faded away. "*Just a trick*" she thought to herself.

Even though she felt tired, she couldn't stop. At least fifty people and her team were counting on her.

The walls collapsed in front of her, and she didn't know what to do. Her runner didn't slow. He was only a dozen feet away now. She remembered someone telling her never to do so, but she'd rather not die by getting knifed this time.

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As she ran, the walls started reforming, and she landed on the opposite side just in time to see the man get crushed.

"Yes!" she yelled, falling to her knees. Almost by magic, the numbers on her watch went from 540 to 600. The familiar green light of the porthole appeared at the end of the hallway, and she ran over to it. She walked right through and emerged back into the lobby. Cheers were awaiting her there.

"Great job, Ells" Michelle, one of the team members, exclaimed.

She got a few pats on the back as she walked over to the snack bar. She gulped down the 1L bottle of water in less than ten seconds, and sat down on one of the picnic benches inside 'The Lobby.'

Kristof, the gang's leader, came and sat down beside her.

"Thanks to you, we might just win this year's tournament. Might be able to upgrade". A smile washed across Ellie's face. *Thanks to her.*

She got up and headed for the other porthole. "See you guys tomorrow" she yelled back as she stepped into the icy cold darkness that would bring her back to reality.

### Chapter 3 by Cody Neubeck



She felt her self falling and falling and then got sucked into an invisible hole. The opacity of the seemingly metal tube increased as width varied. Then the tube took a sharp 90 degree angle. She smacked into the memory foam pad and down onto Ellie's bed.

### Chapter 4 by Calcifer



Blinking her eyes, she noticed the familiar white bland ceiling in her room, the same white desk with a white chair. In fact, everything in her room was white. She wished it was a different color, blue or even a soft purple?

No matter, she got off the bed and scanned her arm. The same droning voice asked.

"Ellie Toulon VR Fighter. Would you like to start your day?"

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Chapter 5 by Langer



Ellie took a moment to gasp. "Yes!" Michelle's voice rang out, and she responded with a naturally joyous "Great news! Commending weekly medical check procedures!" Shortly after a metal cylinder slowly

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descended from the ceiling. Ellie watched as a red horizontal beam passed over her entire body. She got that all too familiar tingling fear in her stomach that came from the thought of what this prodding beam might find within her. This tingling became a soul-devouring burning when the robotic voice revealed the results. "Class-A Lentrobic virus located within your heart." Fear threatened to consume her as she responded with a shaky "What the hell is that?" "The Lentrobic virus is a virus associated with prolonged exposure to the virtual reality system. This virus has been found to have a 95% mortality rate. The cure is yet to be found," the voice said in a menacingly care-free tone.

## Chapter 6 by Angus Holliday



Ellie dropped the scanner on the floor. She reflected for a moment whether it was a mistake or some sort of sabotage. She had not heard of a Lentrobic virus before. Is it possible her diagnostic machine had been hacked by the competition to scare her? She immediately rang her general practitioner for a consultation.

"Ellie, this could very well be cryptovirology, we do not have any news of this biological virus being reported to our official database."

"Thanks Doc, that's a relief!"

"Please ring our security department to arrange an investigation."

Ellie was about to call the security department when her biceps started to hurt in a horrific way. She fell to the ground and the dolorimeter on her smartwatch pressurized into the red zone. The pain started emanating around her heart and then switched off instantly.

Ellie got up from the ground, extremely uneasy, starting to sweat, she quickly wondered if the virus was some how real or if she was still inside the virtual reality world. She tried to rip off her headset but it would not transpire, she was merely tearing at her own hair.

## Chapter 7 by Ronan Dean



Ellie fell down onto the floor sobbing, her career and her life was over. Her biceps started to burn again and she yelled out in pain.

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## Chapter 8 by Magnificat



The pain came in waves, always starting as a searing jolt in her biggest muscles one heartbeat and travelling to her chest the next.

In the minutes she had between each attack she crawled over to her sink to get water and her serious painkillers, the kind she bought off the street and reserved for after her hardest VR matches. She knew it wasn't strictly ethical to use them, but there wasn't a rule against it yet so she always kept a supply handy. She was about to pop them in her mouth when the visitor bell rang.

"Jane Ebel here to see you," the computer intoned.

"Did you call her here from the hospital?" Ellie asked.

"No, the security investigators recommended by your GP will be arriving in less than thirty minutes." The robotic voice paused. "The credentials for Jane Ebel indicate that she is a member of one of the lesser regulatory bodies governing the VR tournaments. Her specialty is in health, safety, and doping standards."

"Goddammit," Ellie said as she chucked the pills across the room into a pile of gear. She didn't want to get barred from the tournament right after she had just qualified. "Let her in, maybe she'll know what this lentro-whatever is."

"Certainly."

Another attack hit Ellie instantly. At the same moment, the door to Ellie's pod hissed open and a plain, middle-aged woman stared blankly at the red-faced teen writhing in pain on the floor. She picked her way across the strewn clothing and VR padding and stood over Ellie's crumpled body. She reached for her communicator and pushed the direct-comm button for her boss.

"Dave, it looks like we got to her just in time, the attacks have started," Ellie came out of her fit

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Jane grabbed Ellie's right bicep. "This is going to hurt like hell," she told Ellie, and jammed the needle in deep. Ellie's eyes rolled back in her head and she fell back, unconscious.

Okay, Jane thought, that will buy us some time. She pulled out the six anti-grav cuffs from her backpack and put them around Ellie's waist, neck, ankles, and arms. She turned them on, they flashed blue, and Ellie's prone form floated up to waist height. "Let's get you into the car and out to Dr. Dave," she told Ellie. "Oh, and by the way, I forgot to do introductions, my name is Jane Ebel."

the end

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